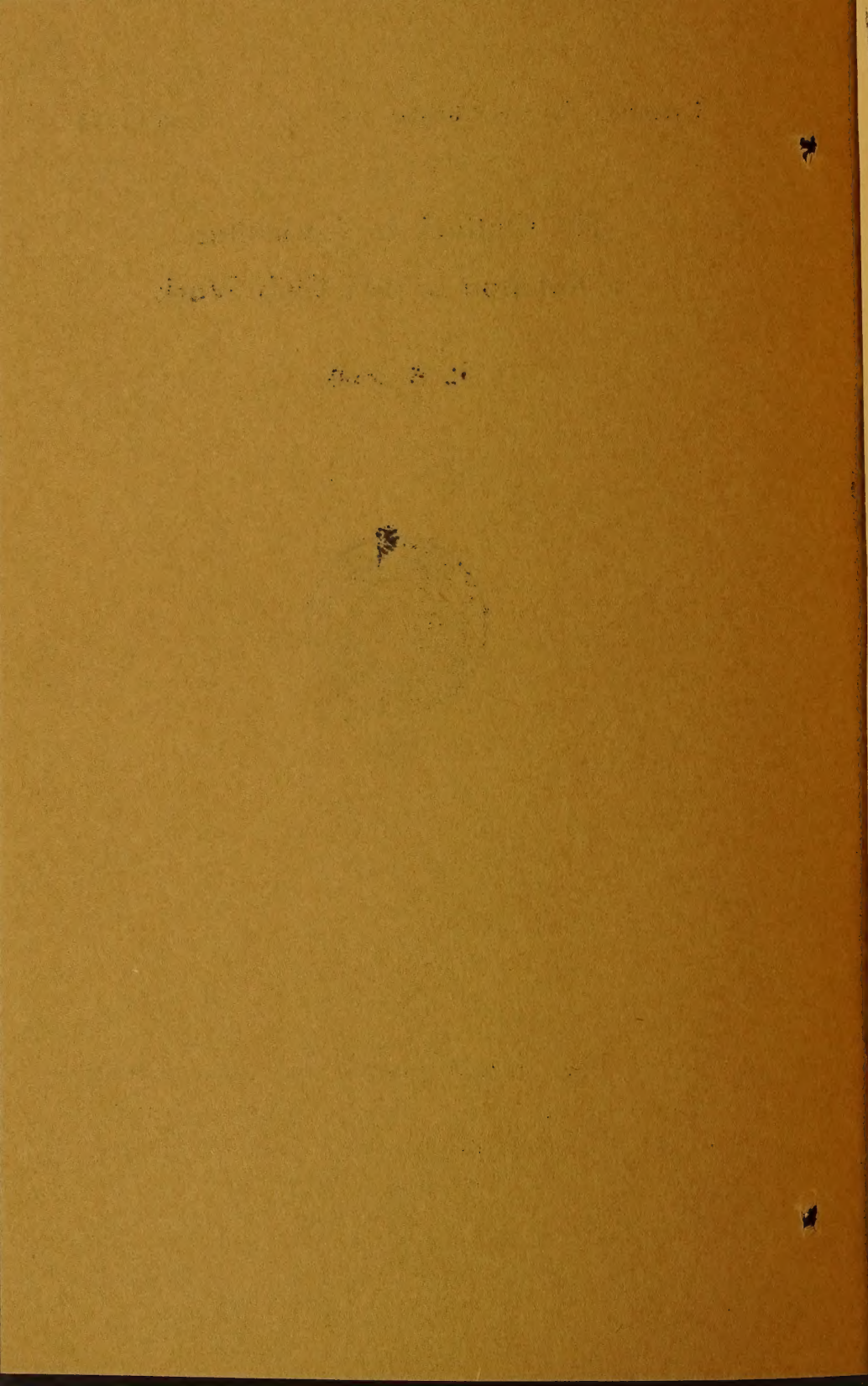


The Outlook in Agriculture in Relation to 4-H Club Work

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THE OUTLOOK IN AGRICULTURE IN RELATION TO 4-H CLUB WORK

C. E. Smith

Chief, Office of Cooperative Extension Work

May I refresh your minds on some of the points of yesterday's paper.

(1) We are working under an agricultural extension law that contemplates increased efficiency in farming and home making. Club work should in some measure further that end.

(2) The American farmer is greatly increasing his efficiency in farming, resulting in larger production per man and a decreasing number of farmers in the United States.

(3) Farms are being increasingly mechanized, to the advantage of both the farmer and the public.

(4) With mechanized farms come larger farms, larger farm business, larger farm incomes, and requiring better farm management, better knowledge of economics, more capable men and women to manage such farms.

(5) In the fierce competition in farming, only those who take advantage of the teachings of modern economics and modern research can hope to compete in farming for profit.

(6) There will always be opportunity for living on small acreages, growing enough for home consumption, and the owners finding supplementary employment at wages, either on farms or in industry.

(7) It probably is desirable to increase the wants of the American farmer, so that those who move to town or live in town may find employment there at good wages in producing things for the Nation's use, including the farm family, and be in position, because of good wages received, to buy the farmer's products. If the farmer can sell his products at a little above cost of efficient production, he can accumulate and buy the products of industry.

(8) As a national policy, we should so reward the farmer that there will always remain on the farm a sufficient number of high-grade men to produce all the food and clothing the Nation needs in times of either peace or war.

(9) Urban people, being in the majority in the United States, must always be kept intelligently informed about agriculture, so that State and national laws made may not be prejudicial to agriculture. Club work has an important part to play in this respect.

DISTRIBUTION: A copy of this circular has been sent to each State extension director, State and assistant State club leader, county and assistant county club agent, agricultural-college library, and experiment-station library.

*An address given at the National Boys' and Girls' 4-H Club Camp, Washington, D. C., June 18, 1931.

(10) In the light of increasing efficiency in America, we are facing a problem of increasing leisure time for all people, including farmers. Club work has a task in preparing farm men and women to profit by such leisure.

Under the law, we have seen that the purpose of cooperative extension work is to improve agriculture, home making, and rural life. Club work is a part of extension. Club work, therefore, concerns itself with these same matters. That is youth's contribution to a part of the world's work. Fortunate it is that in doing this work youth builds itself. The more definitely we organize club work around the improvement of agriculture, home making, and rural life, and the more vital the task we give boys and girls to do in these fields, the more certainly will they grow and build themselves into accomplishing men and women.

It is not enough that a boy grow an acre of corn. He must grow a better acre of corn. It is not enough that the girl raise poultry. She must raise better poultry. There must be a challenge in the job if boys and girls are to grow. Ordinary tasks, done in ordinary ways, are simply work; but ordinary tasks, done in a better way, spell growth and satisfaction and make a contribution to life.

But, if you grow crops or make a home or handle a community problem in a better way, you not only grow yourself but you set an example to others. You diffuse information -- you keep the law. You do the thing expected of you under the Smith-Lever Act.

The thought that I want to leave with you is the setting of a high standard of accomplishment for each club project. If the project is not such as will serve as a demonstration of the better way, it is not likely to carry much weight in the development of the boy or girl. The surest way to build better boys and girls is through challenging tasks, concerned with life's problems and carried out in a better way. We choose farm problems for our boys and girls, because that is the field to which we have been assigned for work. We keep the law; we improve agriculture; we build men and women.

Yesterday I dwelt at some length on the increased efficiency in farming and rural life, following from the teachings of the colleges of agriculture experiment stations, and extension service, and resulting in larger production per man, and therefore the need as time goes on of relatively fewer and fewer farmers to produce all the food and fiber products needed by the people of the United States. We pointed out that a fourth or more of our farm boys and girls leave the farms for employment in commerce and industry because they are not needed on the farms. We also pointed out the substantial preponderance of urban over rural population in the United States and the difference of viewpoint of these two groups as regards production problems.

As a result of this situation, I take it that it is not necessarily the purpose of 4-H club work to make farmers out of boys and girls who form its membership. In fact, we are not greatly concerned whether 4-H club boys and girls remain on the farm or go to town. What we are concerned about is that, whether they go to town or whether they stay on the farm, they shall be intelligently informed on one of the great basic industries of the Nation.

If they stay on the farms, we are certain that the club work they have done will better fit them to take their place and play their full part on the farm and in the home and in rural life. If they go to town, we think club work will insure that they take with them a sympathetic understanding of rural life and rural problems that will help them to interpret to urban groups the rightful place of agriculture in the Nation and to promote right and harmonious relations between urban and rural groups.

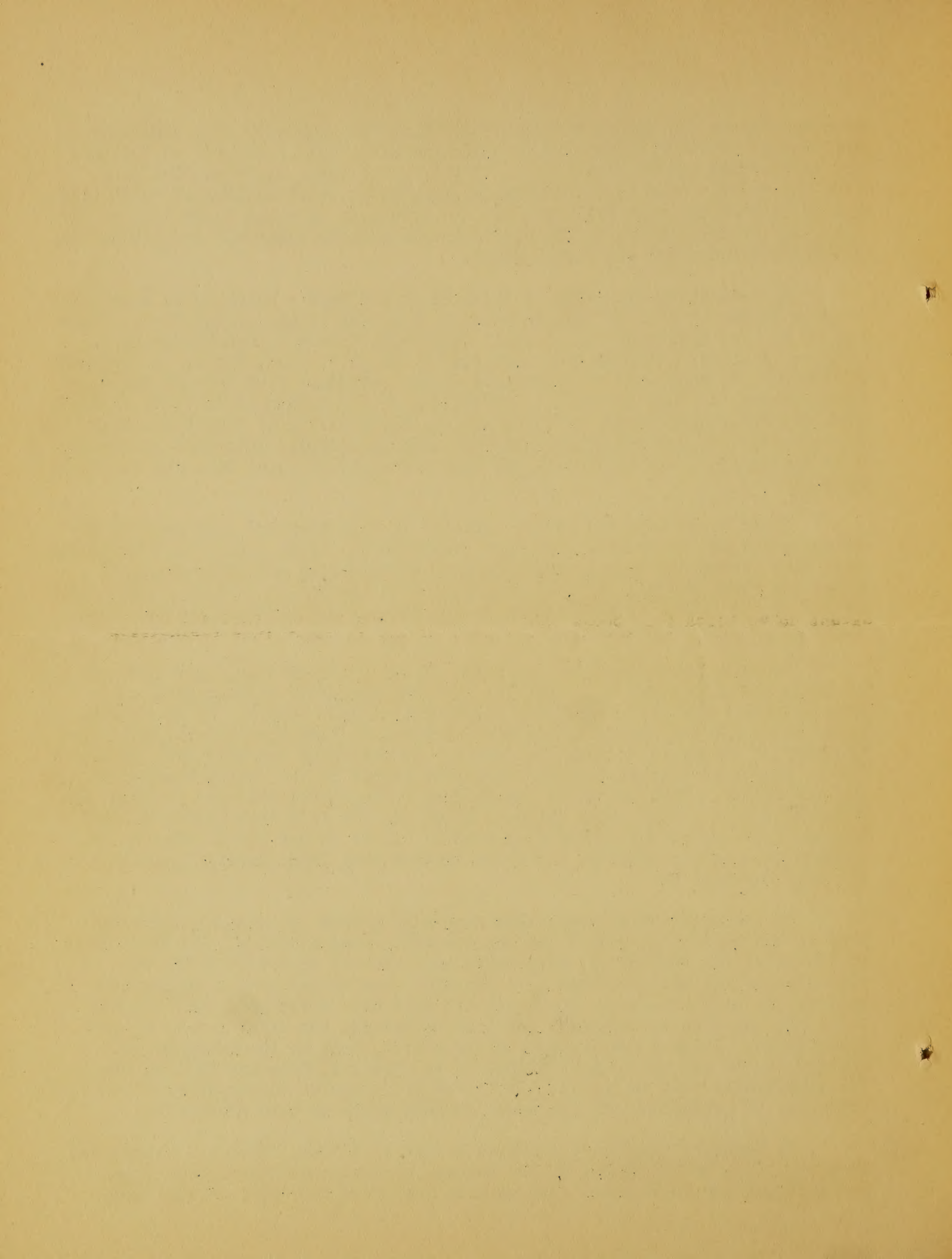
In conducting club work, I think we should have constantly in mind those who are likely to move to town as well as those who remain on the farm. Those who go to town constitute in no small degree the future merchants, bankers, lawyers, doctors, railroad men, captains of industry, city, State, and national officials. We want them to constitute an understanding bond between rural and urban groups, so that in times of depression in the making of national or State laws affecting agriculture or rural people, the settling of disputes between the two groups, they may sympathetically and understandingly interpret the rural mind and may cast their votes in the best interests of rural life and the whole Nation.

These rural boys and girls, schooled in club work and representing the finest youth of the country, may well constitute a little leaven in urban areas that will contribute much toward a common understanding and harmonizing of urban and rural groups. This is much needed in the Nation, and as leaders this is one of the things we should have in the back of our minds in guiding club work.

Increased efficiency on the farms of the United States, increased use of power and machinery, mean that the American farmer is putting more and more intellect and less brawn into his work than ever before. He is working fewer hours per day and doing his work more easily than ever before, and this tendency is likely to increase in future. We are faced squarely with the problem of increased leisure for all classes of people in the United States, including the farmer. This is one of the largest responsibilities ever put upon the American Nation or any other nation. If we can use this prospective leisure wisely, what may we not become as a people? If we do not use it wisely, how certain will be our decline, for it is written that Satan surely finds work for idle hands to do.

In the millions of years that have gone before us, man has spent the most of his days finding food and shelter and making a living. His work hours on the farm, for the masses, have been long, and his opportunity for the education of the mind has been most limited. Now he may make a living more easily. He need not longer spend all his days with bowed head, tilling the soil. He may stop occasionally and look up and see the light and be a partaker in it. It is a new freedom, a new vision, that he is coming to, an opportunity to use the mind to think, to be creative. Some may fail to see the opportunity that is theirs. It is the privilege of the schools, of the colleges, of extension, of club work, to help guide in this emergency.

We probably shall keep children longer in school. They are not needed in agriculture or industry. We are already producing enough without them. How diligent should we be in club work to keep them in school or send them



back to school or on to college! How much we have to teach them about the things that daily surround them that will add to their efficiency, understanding, and joy in life. Botany is a part of agriculture. Should we not include something of it in our club work?-- to know plants when you see them, to be able to call them by name as you meet with them in wood and field and by the roadside; and also to know the ways of the wild life of the wood, the habits of insects and their characteristics, to know the calls and songs of birds and their names, to know the signs of the weather, the clouds and the winds?

Yes, botany and entomology and biology and meteorology and geology and zoology are all a part of agriculture and all proper subjects for extension work in agriculture and home economics and, therefore, for 4-H club work. How much can we not add to the satisfaction of living in the country and on the farms if we teach the boys and girls in 4-H club work something about the elemental things in which they are immersed daily but which to-day are too often unseen, unheard, and not understood. You begin to appreciate nature, painting, poetry, or music when you begin to study and know something about them. And club work has a peculiar task and opportunity in these fields with youth.

In the schools we largely teach from books and must teach from them where a single teacher is compelled to handle so many pupils. To such an extent do we teach from books that the child comes to feel that all knowledge comes from books. In club work we have a chance to teach that information acquired by one's own observation is as truly knowledge as that learned from a book. To acquire facts about ants or bees by observing how they live, how they propagate, how they provide for winter; to learn the habits of birds or fish by observing them, feeding them, catching them, is all education. Your own first-hand observations and studies are as truly fundamental knowledge as anything that ever comes from books. Club work which analyzes conditions and meets needs can teach youth this fact and give them faith in their own observations and thoughts. We want them to be independent thinkers and doers, to have faith in their own observations and thoughts.

One other thought in this connection. We should not let idleness ever overtake a 4-H club member, but should crowd all these matters of the mind upon him or her, so that they will be so busied with constructive, interesting things that increased leisure will mean for them increased opportunity and the full joys of an abundant life.

We must move just a little faster than the forces of evil move.

There is a side thought that I want to bring into our club work with reference to our girls. They are leaving the farm for town in larger numbers than the boys. They find work there, earn money, and feel the joy of independence. Club work should help them stay on the farm longer if they want to. It should help set the stage with parents so that they will be willing to give the girls a chance to earn some money and not have to ask father or mother every time they need a quarter to spend.

I know of no reason why the girl on the farm shouldn't be a partner with mother or father in the management and profits of the poultry flock, the dairy herd, the orchard, or any other enterprise of the farm. Every human soul cherishes independence. Let's enlarge our club projects for girls as well as boys. Let's encourage fathers and mothers to take the girls into fuller partnership with them on the farm as well as the boys. Girls will like the country as well as boys when they have opportunity there equal to that of boys.

Probably one of the biggest tasks before club leaders, and the most meaningful to 4-H club members, is the need for getting before these boys and girls, before it is too late, some knowledge of the economics of agriculture, the choice of farms, the use of land, the possibility or impossibility of winning out in agriculture if they undertake it.

Many young people will inherit the farm of their parents with all its limitations, imperfections, and indebtedness. It looks to the young people like something to start life with. It may be just a millstone to hang around their necks for a lifetime that will prevent them from accomplishing anything or ever getting anywhere.

In these days of agricultural efficiency and close competition, the boy or girl who starts farming on submarginal land handicaps himself and farming for a lifetime. It may be better to give away the old homestead or abandon it than to try to develop it into an efficient farm. Four-H club members should be taught to start life only on naturally good land, productive land, land accessible to markets. They should be shown the need of getting enough land so it is possible to make a living and bring up a family. Then, we need to teach club members something about the use of money and credit and farm organization.

We may develop all kinds of efficiency in our demonstration projects; but, if we fail in teaching boys and girls these larger matters of economic soundness in farm selection, choice of crops we are to grow, or livestock we are to produce, the organization of the farm physically and financially, we fail indeed. Our suggestion is that all of us tie up our work more closely with our economic departments of the colleges, with the farm-management demonstrators; that we carry agricultural outlook material, and farm-accounting analysis and interpretation into our club work. It is not enough that we are busy on a program. We have missed the heart of the matter unless it is a sound program economically.

And now, a final thought as to what this whole story means for rural life in America. The leaven is here and at work in rural America -- the agricultural colleges, the experiment stations, extension work, club work, vocational schools, the press, industry. We are in the midst of a revolution in country life. It is not simply a depression -- it is a revolution. The long hours of exhausting work on the farm to make a bare living are giving way to shorter hours of mechanized farms and the emergence of the mind as we work with the Creator in the improvement of crops and stock. Extension will not let the farmer be content with mediocrity. Extension forces make a suggestion for improvement here, they stimulate action there. They provoke discussion, they carry light, they take the farmer on tours to see, they send him and his wife and children to short course and college to learn. The mind

is fast coming into ascendancy over brawn. We are annually producing in America more than we can consume. The shorter day, the shorter week are coming to the farm as they are to industry. Time for study, time for recreation, time for observation, time for travel, time to be neighborly, time for the development of the genius, the creative that is within us.

More and more, in my judgment, the country will be regarded as the ideal place in which to live, the fashionable place, and farming looked upon as the ideal life, because education will be there, culture will be there, challenging tasks, efficiency, accomplishment, neighborliness, and hospitality, the conveniences of the city -- all will be there. And, besides, our strength is renewed when our feet touch the earth.

In summary, then, we see for club work even greater stress than heretofore on challenging tasks that demonstrate, because only such challenging tasks build the boy and the girl who take part in them. Mediocre work creates no challenge and leads to disintegration and decay of club work.

We must add more economics to club work. The boy or girl must not be handicapped for life because of a wrong start.

We are not concerned, in club work, whether club boys and girls stay on the farm or go to town. In either case, a sympathetic and understanding knowledge of a great basic industry of the Nation is a necessary part of citizenship and a cultured man or woman.

Let's develop an attitude of mind among rural parents so that they will make the girls, as well as the boys, partners with them in the organization, management, and profits of the various industries of the farm.

We are at the beginning of a new epoch in agriculture, characterized by a larger use of power on the farm, shorter hours, greater attention to the economics of production, to cooperation among farmers, to study, recreation, and a larger cultural life. Extension is the most significant part of this leaven that is stimulating this new development. Club work is a part of extension and has the opportunity of the ages to become the most significant part of the whole extension program. May it live up to its opportunity.

THE FIRST PART OF THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF LONDON, FROM THE
BEGINNING OF THE CITY, TO THE
PRESENT TIME.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
THE FIRST VOLUME.
FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CITY,
TO THE PRESENT TIME.

BY
JOHN STOW.
OF THE CITY OF LONDON.
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